

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 AID-05 /078 W

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P R 101605Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3737

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3300

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:SHUM, PINT, PA

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LEADER DOMINGO LAINO FREED

REF: ASUNCION 3253

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: OPPOSITION LEADER DOMINGO LAINO WAS PHYSICALLY RELEASED FROM GOP CUSTODY AT APPROXIMATELY 7:00 P.M. AUGUST 8 FOLLOWING A ONE-HOUR MEETING WITH INTERIOR MINISTER MONTANARO. LAINO HELD A PRESS MEETING AUGUST 9 MORNING IN WHICH REPORTERS FOUND HIM SUBDUED. THIS HAS LEAD TO SPECULATION IN PRESS CIRCLES THAT HE WAS THREATENED BY THE INTERIOR MINISTER. WHEN HE WAS RELEASED, LAINO HAD SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS HIS MEETING WITH MONTANARO BUT WHEN HE MET WITH THE PRESS, HE BEGGED OFF SAYING THE AUTHENTIC RADICAL LIBERALS AS A PARTY WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT REGARDING THE MONTANARO CONVERSATION; PERHAPS IN THE EVENING. LAINO CLAIMED HE WAS SURPRISED AT HIS RELEASE, ATTRIBUTED IT TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES AND THE SUPPORT HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE INTERNAL OPPOSITION AND SAID HE PLANNED TO CONTINUE HIS POLITICAL CAREER AND WORK FOR THE FORMATION OF AN OPPOSITION POLITICAL FRONT.

2. JUDGE CANTERO'S DECISION ORDERING LAINO'S RELEASE

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INCLUDED A RESERVATION THAT THE CASE COULD BE REOPENED IF NEW EVIDENCE INDICATED IT SHOULD BE REVIVED, AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE THREAT OF NEW LEGAL HARASSMENT HANGING OVER LAINO'S HEAD. THE JUDGE'S BASIC FINDING, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY LAINO'S CONTINUED DETENTION. HIS JUDGMENT SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY WOLA REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAD VISITED ASUNCION AND HE FOUND THAT THIS INFORMATION

COUNTERED POLICE CHARGES THAT LAINO HAD BEEN CONSORTING WITH THE "EXTREME LEFT" IN THE U.S. THIS WAS SPECIFICALLY CITED AS THE BASIS FOR HIS DECISION TO ORDER LAINO FREED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. RADICAL LIBERAL SOURCES TELL US THAT THE INTERIOR MINISTER TOLD LAINO THAT THERE ARE UNCONTROLLABLE COLORADO PARTY SUPPORTERS IN THE BARRIO OBRERO (WORKERS DISTRICT) OF ASUNCION WHO MIGHT TRY TO "GET HIM" OUT OF STRONG PATRIOTISM. THE MINISTER CLAIMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE POWERLESS TO GUARANTEE HIS SAFETY FROM SUCH AS ATTACK. THIS HAS BEEN READ BY THE RADICAL LIBERALS AS AN IMPLIED THREAT TO LAINO TO BEHAVE OR ELSE.
WHITE

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NNN

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